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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0570

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SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR AF/RSA - MIKE BITTRICK, AF/S - ELIZABETH PELLETREAU  
GABORONE FOR OCD  
HARARE FOR DATT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MI](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: MALAWI: UN EVALUATION OF MDF PEACEKEEPERS  
IDENTIFIES READINESS NEEDS

REF: LILONGWE 621

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: November 23-24, a UN High Ranking Operational Training and Advisory Team (HROTAT) visited Malawi to inspect the Malawi Defense Force's (MDF) readiness to deploy a battalion to the UN/AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). HROTAT said the MDF passed the initial inspection and would remain a potential troop contributing country (TCC), but still had work to do before deployment. HROTAT identified equipment shortfalls, increased Darfur-focused training, and enhanced planning and logistic capabilities as needs to be addressed. HROTAT would not give a potential date for a deployment to the MDF, and suggested the MDF focus instead on a state of readiness and not a calendar date in their preparations. Comment: an MDF battalion has already started ACOTA peacekeeping training, so equipment shortfalls present the largest obstacle to the MDF's potential deployment to Darfur. The MOD and MDF expressed frustration that Taiwan was the only equipment donor so far, and hope that the U.S. will offer assistance soon. Even with new donor equipment assistance, the need to procure, transport, and train on all new equipment makes the second half of 2008 the earliest the MDF battalion is likely to be ready to deploy. END SUMMARY

HROTAT Visits the Ministry of National Defense  
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12. (SBU) November 23-24, HROTAT visited Malawi to inspect the MDF's readiness to deploy a battalion to UNAMID. HROTAT was composed of two officers from the UN and two officers from the AU, all with significant Darfur experience. The visit began with a meeting at the MOD between the team and Bob Khamisa, Minister of National Defense, the principal secretary and numerous high-ranking MDF officers. During the

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discussion, the MOD erroneously claimed the USG had already committed financial support for equipment. The MOD was also unable to answer HROTAT questions about the length of the MDF's planned commitment. MDF officers stepped in to try and correct the MOD. (Comment: In a later meeting with HROTAT, emboffs were able to clarify that the USG had yet to commit to an financial or equipment support of the MDF. End Comment.)

Equipment Inspection  
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13. (SBU) The MDF brought HROTAT to the Kamuzu Barracks Parade Ground for an equipment inspection. The MDF lined up 4 older Israeli-manufactured Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) and 36 Tata cargo/troop transport trucks, all freshly painted UN white. The MDF also had photos of their 17 newly-refurbished South African Caspir APCs (12 troop carriers, 1 recovery vehicle, 1 ambulance, 1 command post, 1 fuel tanker, and 1 water tanker) also painted white. The MDF commented that the new APCs would be in Malawi by the end of December. The MDF also displayed two tents of medical equipment, one tent of communications equipment, and numerous cots and basic equipment. Most of the medical and communications equipment on display was new, causing HROTAT to question whether the MDF had adequately trained with the equipment they expected to bring to theater.

#### Troops Know the Basics, but Concerns About Sustainment

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14. (SBU) On Day 2 of the inspection, HROTAT briefed the MDF on Darfur and concerns about the deployment. The MDF responded with their own briefing by the battalion commander, Col. Jalale, but did not address HROTAT's concerns about the ability of the MDF to be self-sustaining for 90 days in Darfur. After an inspection of the battalion, HROTAT members broke off into numerous one-on-one discussions with the troops. This was followed by convoy escort and desert driving demonstrations. HROTAT commented that the discussions and demonstrations showed the MDF "knows the basics" of peacekeeping and has some knowledge of what they will face in Darfur, but has yet to fully integrate into training and planning the knowledge the MDF's military observers have gained in their recent tours in Darfur.

#### Equipment Another HROTAT Concern

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15. (SBU) At the end of the two-day inspection, HROTAT said that the MDF had "passed" and would remain a potential troop contributing country, but still had work to do. HROTAT commented that the MDF seemed focused on Darfur and the MDF officers reconfirmed that their commitment to go to Darfur was long-term. The biggest obstacle identified by HROTAT is the required equipment shortfall. HROTAT strongly advised that the MDF bring only one type of APC to Darfur instead of combining the older Israeli models with the new South African ones. (Comment: The MDF would thus require 11 more South African APCs to meet UN requirements. End Comment) Additionally, HROTAT said the MDF should attempt to acquire at least a platoon's worth of additional equipment, including APCs, to ensure future battalions could be trained on the appropriate equipment prior to deployment.

#### HROTAT Recommends Focus on Readiness, Not the Calendar

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16. (SBU) HROTAT made four recommendations to the MDF to complete before moving forward: 1) The MDF should work with donors to complete procurement of all required equipment, and also make donors aware that Malawi's long-term commitment to the UN mission in Darfur may require an enduring commitment from donors; 2) The battalion should complete ACOTA training and seek to incorporate the MDF's Darfur experience into MDF training; 3) Sustainment exercises should be added to staff training so the MDF can demonstrate its ability to account for, store, defend, and deliver supplies; and 4) MDF should focus on its state of readiness rather than an arbitrary date as a target for deployment to Darfur.

#### MOD, MDF Frustrated by Lack of Commitment on Equipment Support from the U.S.

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17. (SBU) Comment: The MDF battalion began ACOTA training Nov. 26 that will address Darfur-specific peacekeeping tasks,

including self-sustainment logistical exercises. HROTAT commented that Darfur is extremely challenging even for more experienced peacekeepers, and that ideally a country like Malawi should gain operational experience in another theater first. They noted, however, that mission constraints will make it difficult to remove Malawi from the list of potential TCCs. According to HROTAT, the MDF battalion appears to be on-par or in even better shape than many of the other African potential contributors, but equipment shortfalls remain the biggest obstacle to deployment. With Taiwan as the only committed donor so far, the government of Malawi will have to recanvas potential donors for support. In discussion with the MOD and MDF after the visit, they expressed frustration over the lack of equipment support thus far from the U.S., and feel that without some U.S. support the MDF will not be able to deploy. Even with additional donor support, the need to procure, transport, and train on all new equipment likely means the second half of 2008 is the earliest timeframe within which the MDF could deploy.

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